

The Ocelot

Ocelots are small cats that are protected by the Endangered Species Act. They are nocturnal animals meaning they hunt at night. Their names come from an Aztec word. Their problem is that they are endangered. They have been hunted for their fur. Their habitat is also an issue. Their habitat is endangered because of deforestation.

Ocelots are unique animals. They use their coats to blend in their habitat. They range in color from light yellow to reddish gray, with dark spots and stripes. In the U.S. the ocelot is found in Southern Texas. Ocelots are picky eaters. They eat mice, rabbits, birds, snakes, lizards, fish and frogs. According to In Sync Exotics, "An ocelot requires 600-800 grams (21-28 oz) of food everyday to satisfy its energy requirement."

Ocelots are important to the ecosystem because they keep the small mammals and bird populations at a healthy level. They have also been hunted for their fur. Their habitat is endangered because of deforestation. Trees are being cut down to make roads and buildings. The ESA protects the ocelot by ensuring ocelots are not killed. The ESA facts sheet says, "Under the Endangered Species Act, it is unlawful for anyone to harm endangered, or "take" a member of a listed species."

Ocelots are small gorgeous cats who have been hunted and endangered. Their habitat is being torn down for roads and buildings but without them, we would be overpopulated with the small animals they prey on. Let's help protect them by placing them somewhere they won't be messed with.